

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 29, 2023

The Honorable Shalanda Young
Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th St NW
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Director Young:

We write to express our disappointment that the administration did not include additional funding for the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant (SBIWTP) in its supplemental funding request. SBIWTP plays a critical role mitigating the impact of transboundary flows from Mexico into Southern California. Unfortunately, years of underinvestment have left SBIWTP in dire need of emergency repairs and complicate the planned expansion of the plant to meet international treaty requirements. Failure to find the funding needed to take immediate action will only perpetuate a status quo that threatens the local and state economy, degrades the environment, facilitates environmental injustice, and complicates our national security posture.

The transboundary sewage crisis has reached a tipping point. San Diegans are experiencing the second summer in a row of beach closures due to wastewater flowing north from Baja California, Mexico. The beaches of [Imperial Beach](#) and [Coronado](#), which are closed for the summer due to contamination, offer the nearest and often most affordable access for many of San Diego's disadvantaged communities. These closures jeopardize the local tourism economy and threaten the livelihood of thousands of hotel and hospitality jobs. Many of the communities most impacted by transboundary sewage are also lower income and primarily Latino neighborhoods in South San Diego County, such as San Ysidro, National City and Chula Vista. Wind often carries nauseous fumes emitted by contaminated sediment left behind by dried up wastewater flows into nearby working-class communities and dangerously degrades their air quality.

Transboundary flows also contaminate the waters used to train our service members. The Navy [moves](#) training events to ensure its personnel do not swim in polluted waters that threaten their health and well-being. Similarly, Federal Agents assigned to the region have [identified](#) extensive hazards they confront when patrolling in Tijuana River Valley and the detrimental effect these [conditions](#) have on their health. An inability to train for military operations or patrol our nation's border represents an unacceptable risk to our national security.

We need the administration's immediate assistance to address one of the leading environmental catastrophes in the Western Hemisphere. Your response to the following questions will help us determine how Congress can work with the administration to provide immediate relief to this challenge.

- How will the administration commit the funding needed to meet the SBIWTP's requirement to process 50 million gallon per day of untreated water as outlined in international treaty Minute 328?
- Why did the administration not include additional assistance for SBIWTP in its supplemental funding request given that this crisis clearly poses a threat to our national security personnel?
- How will the administration program future additional funding for the International Boundary and Water Commission, which oversees SBIWTP?

We look forward to your timely response and working together to address this urgent challenge.

Sincerely,



Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress



Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress



Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



Mike Levin
Member of Congress



Katie Porter
Member of Congress



Nancy Pelosi
Member of Congress

Pete Aguilar

Pete Aguilar
Member of Congress

Salud Carbajal

Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress

Barbara Lee

Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

Jimmy Panetta

Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress

Jimmy Gomez

Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress

Doris Matsui

Doris Matsui
Member of Congress